

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2093

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WZ, SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MAKING ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO
OUST BUTHELEZI

REFS: A) 75 DURBAN A-78; B) 75 DURBAN A-49; C) 74 DURBAN

A-111; DL 74 DURBAN A-54

SUMMARY: CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI IS ONCE AGAIN FACED WITH A SOUTH
AFRICAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED ATTEMPT TO CHALLENGE HIS LEADERSHIP
OF THE KWAZULU GOVERNMENT. UNLIKE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS
TO SUBVERT HIM IN WHICH AN OPPOSITION HAD TO BE CREATED EX
NIHILO, THE SAG IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DISSATISFACTIONS AMONG
ZULU BUSINESSMENT AND CHIEFS WITH BUTHELEZI'S POLICIES.
ADDITIONALLY, THE ZULU KING IS DISSATISFIED WIZH HIS (KWAZULU)
CONSTITUTIONALLY MANDATED APOLITICAL ROLE AND, WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT
OF SWAZILAND'S KING SOBHUZA IS MAKING A BID TO COMPETE WITH
BUTHELEZI. WHILE BUTHELEZI HAS WEATHERED

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PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO OUST HIM, AND HAS EMERGED IN A

STRONGER POSITION, EVEN A CLEARCUT VICTORY IN THIS INSTANCE WILL MEAN THE LOSS OF INFLUENCE OVER THE CRUCIAL GROUPS OF ZULU BUSINESSMEN AND CHIEFS AND A CONCOMITANT WEAKENING OF HIS POLITICAL POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. DESPITE PERSISTENT FAILURES IN THE PAST, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) IS MAKING STILL ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO CHALLENGE THE LEADERSHIP OF CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI. UNLIKE THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIVELY SIMPLE PLOTS OF THE PAST, THE CHALLENGE THIS TIME IS FROM A COMPLEX COALITION OF FIGURES INVOLVED IN KWAZULU POLITICS, FUNDED BY THE SAG, AND ENCOURAGED BY SWAZILAND'S KING SOBHUZA. TO DATE, THE OPPOSITION HAS DONE LITTLE MORE THAN MEET SEVERAL TIMES TO VOICE OBJECTIONS TO BUTHELEZI'S POLICIES. THEY PLAN, HOWEVER, TO FORM A POLITICAL PARTY TO FORMALLY OPPOSE BUTHELEZI IN THE KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

2. WITHIN KWAZULU, THREE FACTIONS, DESPITE THEIR DISPARATE INTERESTS, HAVE COALESCED TO OPPOSE BUTHELEZI: 1) PARAMOUNT CHIEF GOODWILL ZWELITHINI, KING OF THE SULUS; 2) A NUMBER OF LESSER ZULU CHIEFS, AND 3) A GROUP OF ZULU BUSINESSMEN.

A. THE ZULU BUSINESSMEN, MOST OF WHOM ARE MEMBERS OF THE INYANDA (AFRICAN) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ARE REACTING AGAINST BUTHELEZI'S PROGRAM OF ESTABLISHING "TRI-COMPANIES", BUSINESSES WHICH WOULD BE JOINTLY OWNED BY ESTABLISHED WHITE FIRMS AND AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS (REF A.). DESPITE THEIR RELUCTANT EARLIER APPROVAL OF THE PLAN, INYANDA REJECTED THE TRI-COMPANIES CONCEPT AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING IN LATE NOVEMBER 1975. THE AFRICAN BUSINESSMEN ARGUE THAT ALLOWING LARGE WHITE FIRMS INTO THE KWAZULU MARKET WOULD DENY BUSINESS TO SMALL AFRICAN OWNED CONCERNS WHICH COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY COMPETE WITH THE POWERFUL WHITE BUSINESSES.

BM THE ZULU CHIEFS ARE RESTIVE BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THEIR TRADITIONAL PREROGATIVES ARE BEING UNDERMINED BY THE GROWING STRENGTH OF INKATHA, BUTHELEZI'S CULTURAL/POLITICAL ORGANIZATION (REF B.). THEY FEEL INKATHA IS AN ATTEMPT BY BUTHELEZI TO DEVELOP AN INDEPENDENT POWER BASE DESIGNED TO PARALLEL THE KWAZULU GOVERNMENT AND GIVE HIM ADDITIONAL INFLUENCE OVER THE KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, DOMINATED BY TRADITIONAL CHIEFS HOLDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KKC. THE KING, FORBIDDEN BY THE KWAZULU CONSTITUTION FROM ENGAGING IN PARTISAN POLITICS, HAS GROWN RESTLESS WITH HIS LIMITED ROLE AS A FIGUREHEAD. HE HAS BEEN INFLUENCED TO A GREAT EXTENT BY KING SOBHUZA OF SWAZILAND. ENGAGED TO SOBHUZA'S DAUGHTER PRINCESS MANTFOMBI (SHE HAS ALREADY BORE HIM A SON), ZWELITHINI HAS BEEN ATTRACTED BY SOBHUZA'S STYLE OF TRADITIONAL (AUTOCRATIC) LEADERSHIP. THE KING HAS MADE NUMEROUS VISITS TO SWAZILAND OVER THE LAST YEAR. ADDITIONALLY, ONE OF THE ANTI-BUTHELEZI CHIEFS, M. MAPHUMULO HAS ARROGATED THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO THE KING AND HAS SUCCESSFULLY INFLUENCED HIM TO REINVIGORATE THE THRONE. KING MAPHUMULO IS ALSO ENGAGED TO ONE OF SOBHUZA'S DAUGHTERS.

3. AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, THE SAG IS COVERTLY FUNDING BUTHELEZI'S OPPOSITION. MONEY IS BEING CHanneled THROUGH ISCOR, THE LARGE NATIONAL STEEL COMPANY IN NEWCASTLE. (ONE MEMBER OF BUTHELEZI'S CABINET CONTENDS THAT THE SAG HAS SPENT "MILLIONS" ON THE ATTEMPT TO OUST BUTHELEZI). SEVERAL INFORMANTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT A WHITE

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MEMBER OF THE ISCOR STAFF HAS PROVIDED FUNDS FOR THE KING AND WAS

INSTRUMENTAL IN "SOLICITING" DONATIONS FROM BOTH WHITE AND AFRICAN BUSINESSMEN FOR THE PURCHASE OF A NEW MERCEDES FOR KING ZWELITHINI. HE WAS ALSO REPORTED TO BE IN ATTENDANCE AT AN OPPOSITION MEETING OF CHIEFS AND BUSINESSMEN -- IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ACT WHICH PROHIBITS THE DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS FROM INTERFERRING IN EACH OTHERS' POLITICS -- WHICH THE KING ALSO ATTENDED. ISCOR HAS ALSO BEEN SUPPORTING THE KING BY HIRING A LARGE NUMBER OF WORKERS FROM THE NONGOMA DISTRICT, IN WHICH THE ROYAL KRAAL IS LOCATED.

4. KING SOBHUZA'S INTEREST IN ZULU POLITICS APPEARS TO BE DUAL PURPOSE GENERALLY IN EXPANDING HIS INFLUENCE AND IS CONCERNED WITH RESOLVING, TO HIS SATISFACTION, SWAZILAND'S CLAIMS ON THE INGWAVUMA DISTRICT OF KWAZULU (REF C).

5. COMMENT: BUTHELEZI HAS REPORTEDLY SAID HE IS NOT SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH THIS LATEST OPPOSITION ATTEMPT. YET, HE HAS CALLED SPECIAL SESSIONS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF INKATHA (JANUARY 16) AND THE KWAZULU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (KLA) (JANUARY 19) TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGE. AS HE HAS IN THE PAST, (REF D) BUTHELEZI WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO USE HIS STRENGTH IN THE KLA TO PUBLICLY PILLORY HIS OPPONENTS. UNLIKE PAST EPISODES OF THIS NATURE, FROM WHICH BUTHELEZI EMERGED STRONGER THAN EVER, HE MAY FIND HIS POSITION WEAKENED EVEN IF HE CLEARLY DEFEATS HIS OPPOSITION. PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS BY THE SAG TO SUBVERT BUTHELEZI HAVE BEEN PERCEIVED BY AFRICANS AS PATENT ATTEMPTS BY THE GOVERNMENT TO INTERFERE IN ZULU POLITICS; IN THE PAST THE SAG ATTEMPTED TO CREATE OPPOSITION DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT GRIEVANCES AGAINST BUTHELEZI. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE SAG APPEARS TO HAVE FOUND LEGITIMATE DISSATISFACTION ON THE PART OF THE SMALL CLASS OF ZULU BUSINESSMENT WHO FEEL THREATENED BY THE PROSPECT OF COMPETING WITH LARGE WHITE FIRMS FOR THE AFRICANS' RAND AND THE RELATIVELY LARGER NUMBER OF CHIEFS, AS WELL AS THE KING, WHO SEE THEIR TRADITIONAL PREROGATIVES THREATENED BY BUTHELEZI'S USE OF INKATHA TO BUILD A POWER BASE INDEPENDENT OF THE TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY AND TO MANIPULATE DIRECTLY THE MASS OF AFRICANS. BERG

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